CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 31 JULY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A STATEMENT MADE ON 25 JULY 1996 BY A SPOKESMAN FOR THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

I have the honour to forward to you a statement made on 25 July 1996 by a spokesman for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I would be grateful if you would have this statement distributed as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Signed) Joëlle BOURGOIS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of France
to the Conference on Disarmament

STATEMENT MADE BY A SPOKESMAN FOR THE FRENCH MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON 25 JULY 1996

The negotiations on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty are to resume in Geneva on 29 July.

The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Mr. Ramaker, tabled a draft treaty on 28 June.

France is prepared to support the speedy transmittal of this text, as it stands, to the United Nations General Assembly with a view to the signing of the treaty in New York in the autumn of 1996.

On 27 June, our representative at the Conference on Disarmament stated that France would be ready to accept the Chairman's draft *as it stood*, despite the imperfections it contains from our standpoint, which are part and parcel of a compromise.

The Ad Hoc Committee Chairman's draft is the outcome of two and a half years' negotiations. We do not see how its balance could be substantially improved. The time has now come to reach a decision, even though the negotiations are scheduled to end at the latest on 13 September, the deadline set by the Conference on Disarmament for the completion of its work in 1996.

One of the fundamental achievements of this draft treaty relates to the definition of its scope: it corresponds to the zero option put forward by France in August 1995. We also consider that the deterrent nature of the verification regime has been preserved.

Of course, we would have preferred a text closer to our positions on certain points. I have in mind in particular the arrangements for on-site inspections, which we would have liked to be more intrusive. We are also of the view that the wording of the preamble is unbalanced to the detriment of non-proliferation. Lastly, as far as entry into force is concerned, we would have preferred a somewhat more flexible clause.

Nevertheless, the Ramaker draft as it stands constitutes a sensible compromise.